

# Foods to relieve your PMS symptoms



*By CNM Naturopathic Nutritionist Karla Bohan. Karla specialises in weight management and sports nutrition.*

Pre-menstrual syndrome and menstruation have been associated with symptoms that can leave you feeling miserable. These are caused by changes in hormone levels and may include: fluid retention, bloating, abdominal pain, mood swings, irritability, headaches, breast tenderness, food cravings, and appetite changes.

The good news is that you can reduce some of these symptoms by making simple dietary and lifestyle changes.

- Limit your intake of salt and salty foods, and drink plenty of water to remain well hydrated. These steps can help prevent water retention.
- Eat healthily and have regular meals to maintain energy levels and decrease food cravings.
- Avoid foods and drinks high in added sugars such as soft drinks, fruit juices, biscuits, pastries, ice cream and sweets. These foods negatively affect energy levels and increase bloating and irritability. To manage sweet cravings, try having a piece of fruit and a small handful of unsalted almonds instead.
- Limit your consumption of caffeine and alcohol to prevent dehydration.
- Include iron-rich foods such as green leafy vegetables, beans, lentils, eggs, dried fruits and wholegrains to prevent anaemia.

Being obese or having a sedentary lifestyle increases the likelihood of pre-menstrual syndrome. So managing your weight and exercising regularly are a winning combination to feeling good. Even a daily 15-minute walk will bring great benefits both to your mood and waistline.

According to the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, there is evidence that supplements of calcium, magnesium, vitamin D, or *agnus castus* may be helpful.

► **CNM trains students for careers in natural therapies.**  
Visit [www.naturopathy.ie](http://www.naturopathy.ie) or call 01 2353084